

## Interview with Richard Funkhouser

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR RICHARD FUNKHOUSER

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*Q: Mr. Ambassador, how did you become attracted to the Foreign Service?*

FUNKHOUSER: I suppose it started when my grandfather had a set of "National Geographics." I was born and raised as a young man in Trenton, New Jersey, and, whimsically, I used to look at the "National Geographics" and figure out the farthest place I could get from Trenton, which turned out to be Outer Mongolia, in the country of the yaks, and I resolved that I would get there. I pursued that goal reasonably consistently through my prep school and university.

*Q: What type of preparation did you have in school?*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, I had the usual liberal arts in Taft School. And perhaps there I got my best foundation. As the Duke, our English teacher in Honors English, told us: we would probably never know more about English literature and history in our intellectual careers than we did when we were seniors at Taft School. I found that I basically got my best foundation there.

At Princeton, I started off in History and English, but my father went broke during the depression, and I had to aim at getting a job. So, I went from the liberal arts into

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engineering. But I found that I disliked engineering and went back into liberal arts. The only way I could get back there was through geology, in the Arts [and] not [the] Science curriculum. So I thought I might get a job with an oil company when I got out of school. Indeed, that turned out to be the case so that my background is not as much history and political science as it might have been. I got high marks, became a Phi Beta and got on what Princeton called the "No-course Plan," which was for those students who had top grades. And I worked very, very hard. I'm not all that intelligent, but I worked like a dog to keep my scholarship. Then I was allowed to take any courses I wanted in my senior year. So I could sit in on history, art, science, architecture, any courses I wished, which proved to be reasonably useful in later years in my Foreign Service career.

*Q: When did you move to the Foreign Service?*

FUNKHOUSER: After I got out of Princeton in '39 and was offered a job by Nelson Rockefeller, who had attended a Yale-Harvard-Princeton Conference where I spoke. He passed the word on that Standard Oil might give me a job.

I went to South America for Standard Oil of Venezuela. In those days I had read all of the literature on how to get into the Foreign Service. They didn't teach languages at that time to the extent they do now, and they urged young men who were interested in foreign affairs to try it out first. And to try it out, not at government expense, but at private industry expense. Commercial activities were very important, as you know, in the Foreign Service in those days. We were encouraged to go with private industry abroad to learn the languages, to find out whether we were truly interested in life overseas, and if a foreign environment would find us useful. I always had in mind taking my FSO exams.

But then the war broke out. I went into the Air Force following Pearl Harbor, several of us young geologists/engineers working for Standard Oil Company in Venezuela resigned to volunteer for the Army Air Corps, despite our exemption from military service for the duration. Aside from youthful patriotism and vision of becoming a pilot, it was for me a

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chance to change careers from industry hopefully to diplomacy. I went to Burma, India, China. Came back. Went to the State Department, asked when the exams were being given. Standard Oil had promised me a job and a house (I was married during the war) in Venezuela at a good salary. But I always wanted to get in the Foreign Service. When I arrived at Old State they told me at the desk that the examinations had just been given the day before. I asked, "When will the next ones be given?"

"Oh, next year."

Needless to say, I had to earn a living and was about ready to go back to Venezuela with my young bride when the receptionist said, "Well, there are other ways of working overseas. Go down and see our Personnel Officer down in the basement" of what is now the Executive Office Building.

I went down there and, believe it or not, a classmate of mine, Findley Burns, whom you undoubtedly know, was the young Personnel Officer. He said, "You're an oil expert, aren't you?"

I said, "No."

He said, "You worked for an oil company, didn't you?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "You're an oil expert to the State Department."

I said, "Okay."

He said, "We and the British are both trying to get the oil industry back on its feet. Not only the industry, but get oil moving to all the destroyed countries of Western Europe."Q: We're talking about what, 1945?

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FUNKHOUSER: We're talking about 1945 in September. And Findley told me that both the Americans and the British Foreign Service were trying to get a few people to go to key oil industry centers such as Paris with responsibilities for Western Europe and French North Africa, London and the empire as it was, Cairo and all of the Middle East, and Tokyo for the Pacific area. What we were assigned to do was to be contact with government officials who worked on oil problems and energy (they didn't have departments of energy then), Foreign Office people who were trying to handle political problems in oil-producing countries, and/or Treasury reps. We were having great problems with what was called then and became the "dollar-sterling oil problem," wherein the British would produce oil from the Middle East and sell it for sterling to countries that had built up great pound debts during World War II. The British would sell them "sterling oil" which they could get at a much cheaper price than with American dollars. No one had dollars, everyone had sterling. And so these were problems which had to be worked out in Western Europe.

Let's take, for example, tank cars. The Germans stole the French tank cars, then the Russians stole the German tank cars. And what a Petroleum Attache had to do was try to get the tank cars back from wherever they were. Many were destroyed, but tank cars are pretty tough, too.

And pipelines; we had a lot of pipelines in Europe such as were laid down during the war from Marseille up the Rhone Valley. The problem was to dispose of those pipelines. They weren't meant to last very long: they were above the ground and the one from Marseille had so many holes in it from French peasants trying to get gasoline for their tractors that they weren't worth a great deal. But there were problems of negotiation which even as a junior Foreign Service officer Class Six I handled. I became the focal point in the embassy for trying to get the flow of oil moving. This was my first job. I had the title of Acting Regional Petroleum Attache until I took the exams and became a Third Secretary. A secondary but significant responsibility for me was to allocate and distribute to the Americans in France coupons issued by the French government for rationed gasoline. I

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sometimes wondered why we as a naive, young couple seemed to be so popular and so often invited by businessmen to the best black market restaurants?!

In retrospect, I am also struck by how lucky I was to learn my first diplomatic ropes from such outstanding officers as Douglas MacArthur and Livingston Merchant. Coming from three years in the oil fields and two years piloting a plane over the Hump, I was unable to draft reports or speak in meetings effectively. Doug redrafted my diplomatic notes; Livy was a model chairman of staff meetings where he could brilliantly summarize disparate views so as to make each participant believe his contribution was included. No one in my career could match him. This was undoubtedly why our Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery, who strangely enough was embarrassingly inarticulate in large meetings, sent Livy to Washington to sell the \$500 million aid package for France which preceded and probably inspired the Marshall Plan.

Q: I would like to dwell on this, but we're going to concentrate sort of on your more senior time. But knowing the Foreign Service pattern, I noticed that more than anyone that I can recall, you've moved around, both in various areas and different jobs. I mean, obviously your language to begin with was Spanish, I assume?

FUNKHOUSER: It started off with Spanish, but it was vulgar. I learned it in the oil fields and lived with Venezuelan oil roughnecks. It got a few laughs out of Joe Green when I claimed Spanish for the oral exam.

And then I'd had the usual Latin five years and French five years at Taft and Princeton, so I claimed both Spanish and French and did really very poorly in both in the eyes of the exam board, which I got through narrowly.

Q: *Well, I notice you became acting DCM in Damascus rather soon in your career. How did this come about? This was 1955 to 1958.*

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FUNKHOUSER: The foundation for that, basically, was that my second job was Petroleum Attach# for the entire Middle East from Tehran to the Sudan, from Aden to Istanbul. And I had been to all of the countries of the Middle East, including Syria, over a two-year period reporting on some of the most extraordinary and revolutionary movements in the energy world. I was very lucky to have that job, because in those days, in '47 to '49, we Americans were just trying to get a foothold in the Middle East. We had some concessions in Saudi Arabia, but there were tremendous purchases taking place by Standard Jersey and Socony, and Standard of California and Texas, plus "independents." And I really got a rich background in a global development and an overview of the Middle East from what is not an unimportant base, that is, the oil point of view, which is political, strategic and economic.

So, I had both political and economic background in the Middle East, and when the job in Damascus came up I went there, first, as Economic Counselor, then I was put in charge of the Political Section as well, and ended up as DCM.

Q: Let me ask this. Coming in as a petroleum expert into what was still partly the old Foreign Service, which had a certain disdain, or at least had a reputation for disdain for experts, did you find any problems with the Foreign Service in accepting you or being able to operate within that environment?

FUNKHOUSER: Yes, yes I did. And consequently I made it a key aim in my career to get out of oil expertise. I came back as George McGhee's so-called petroleum advisor for the Middle East in '49. And that was like advising the Encyclopedia Britannica on oil. He made his first hundred million as a Rhodes scholar who found a huge gas field in Louisiana. But in any event, my aim was to get out of specialization for just that reason. It was certainly very useful to me because it gave me infinitely more responsibilities than other junior officers and enabled me to get promoted faster, which was in every ambitious Foreign Service officer's interest. But after six highly exciting and productive years as an oil expert,

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I asked if I could get into the political section. I became, in '52 I think, the desk officer for Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. That really moved me into the accepted service.

Also, I had taken my Foreign Service exams. I got into State as an expert, but I had been advised strongly at the onset by Newby Walmsley and other career Foreign Service officers that to be an FS0-6 [Foreign Service Officer Class Six] is infinitely more important to your career than to be an FSR-2 [Foreign Service Reserve Officer Class Two].

*Q: We're talking about a Foreign Service reserve officer.*

FUNKHOUSER: That's right. So I took my exams, and I got through them and came in. I went backwards, dropped my reserve commission, and went back into FS0-6, which was the bottom, Third Secretary, at a loss of salary, but I got into the mainstream. Yes, you're right. There was a spirit against the expert in those days, and rightfully so. I wanted to move into the political area, as well as the broader economic area.

*Q: Well, turning to that, I would like to move to your assignment tMoscow as Economic Counselor in 1961 to 1964.*

FUNKHOUSER: I arrived in Moscow September 1, 1961, at four o'clock in the afternoon and departed September 1, 1964 at four PM. Three years to the dot. (Tours of duty at Moscow, a maximum "hardship post," rarely exceeded two years. When asked to serve a third year, I had to promise my wife "not one minute more.")

*Q: How did this come about?*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, it was sort of a natural progression. I had been in economic and commercial affairs a good part of my career in the Middle East, in Western Europe, in Syria. I also had political experience in Middle Eastern affairs. I had been bombed in Cairo by American Lend-Lease B-17s with American pilots making \$1,000 a flight over Cairo flying for the Zionists. I saw the Palestine situation from the beginning. Fifty years

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later, it is hard to remember how popular the U.S. was throughout the Middle East. Unlike the colonial powers, Americans had established the only Western-type universities in the region with the result that the ruling classes were predominantly pro-American. This changed overnight in 1948 with the partition of Palestine and American sponsorship of the state of Israel over the vehement objections of Secretary of State General Marshall and all other top officials except Truman's Domestic Affairs Advisor, Clark Clifford. I have often wondered whether Truman's decision pushed his candidacy over Dewey over the top several months later? I had been assigned to Palestine and to a dozen Arab countries. And when I was in Syria during the Suez Crisis it became very clear to me, not so much through cynicism I think, but through realism, if you know the Middle East, you know that the United States is quite unable to take and treat Arabs and Israelis evenhandedly.

I got tired seeing my Arab friends come across a crowded room shaking their finger, "Why do you take these positions," knowing what they were going to say. I was sympathetic to their point of view to an extent, but nevertheless was reluctant to get in the middle of an ancient fight between two "brothers." I learned on the Iraq, Syria and Lebanon Desk that lesson when I invited the top Arab whom I knew in Washington to meet with the Special Advisor to the Secretary, the top representative of the Jewish point of view in Washington. I'll never forget it. I drove up in a little Topolino, which was a cheap Italian car which you could pick up and the sort of convertible that you put the top back with one hand. Up drove Kayali, the military attache from the Syrian embassy...he was very bright and had very good connections...in a big blue, I think it was, big blue convertible Cadillac. He was followed by the representative in the State Department on Jewish affairs in a big white Cadillac convertible. It was hard to tell them apart. They looked very, very similar and swarthy. They both had a certain weight. Both were very, very bright. And we went up to Kayali's apartment. And within five minutes of the conversation, and here I was trying to get the point of view from both sides, it became very evident to me they liked each other, they knew everything about the other's business. They were fun to be around. They enjoyed each other's company. I thought to myself, "Why in heaven's name are you, Dick



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Funkhouser, and/or the United States, trying to get between these two?” And I resolved that that was an unresolvable question for the United States Government. I guess it was cowardly, but I wanted no further part of Middle Eastern Affairs, because I thought it was and would be a disaster. I later prepared a “Doomsday Scenario” along the lines of Nevil Shute's “On the Beach” in which nuclear disaster starts in the Middle East. I visualized unlimited U.S. political/financial/military/media support for Israel driving the Arabs first to despair, next to terrorism, then to oil blockade, then to war (non-nuclear).

Current Middle East and other press reports asserting that Secretary of State Albright has stacked her Middle East staff with Jewish officers, that she believes power exists to be used, that she plans to extend NATO eastwards to Israel might rekindle this scenario, however off my timetable. Equally off in timing was my last message to the Department January 30, 1976 on retirement in which my “swan song” depicted the Middle East as the foremost, long-term threat to U.S. security because of our blank-check for Israel under all Congresses and Presidents (except Eisenhower). I concluded irreverently, “Holy Christ...what would He think as a Jew, prophet or Son of God to return home?” I was reminded of how we scoffed at the outlandish statement of our UN Ambassador, Warren Austin, during the UN debates on Palestine in 1948, “Why can't the Arabs and Jews act like good Christians?!” Fifty years later, this possibility of the Golden Rule replacing “an eye for an eye” (or rather “10 eyes for an eye”) seems even more remote.

And so, I tried to get out. When I got assigned to the National War College, I did my thesis on what I knew, which was the Middle East, and what I hoped to know, which was its border problems with the Soviet Union. I studied Russian in the early morning FSI [Foreign Service Institute] classes and I did my thesis on the historical establishment of the land boundaries between Russia and Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia.

*Q: So you saw your career going in one direction, you made a verconscious effort to turn it around.*

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FUNKHOUSER: I did indeed. To move into an area that I wanted to be in. It's not unique. Many officers want to leave the Third World, whether Africa or South America or the Middle East, and try to get into countries that really are closer to Western civilization, where most families basically prefer to be.

Q: When you went to Moscow as Economic Counselor, again we're talking about 1961 to 1964, what were your main tasks? This was the beginning of the Kennedy Administration, obviously a time of testing and strain and all. But as Economic Counselor, what were your jobs?

FUNKHOUSER: Well, the Economic Counselor in Moscow has on his staff various experts: on nuclear energy, on agriculture. One of my major jobs there was to work on budgetary problems, particularly those that might indicate where the Soviets were spending their money, given all of the vast difficulties of figuring out anything significant from what the Soviets published, such as the progress on the Five Year Plan. Certainly nothing was more important to the Embassy or Washington than to try to analyze how the Soviets were doing when they put out their progress report on how they were fulfilling their Five Year Plan. Whether they were putting more money into, as Khrushchev did, into agriculture....he plowed up the virgin lands, for example. We, through our very expert agricultural attaches, would go wherever we were allowed to go, look at the crops and see whether the harvest would be such as to support what the Soviets were claiming.

*Q: This was quite a gamble, wasn't it, on Khrushchev's part?*

FUNKHOUSER: Oh, it was a gamble, and it helped seal his doom. It was a disaster. He plowed up the virgin lands. You know he went to Iowa, saw our corn there and thought that maybe because it was flat, the virgin lands of Kazakhstan might have had the same fertility and the same soil that we do in the West. But it wasn't that way. The topsoil was far thinner. And the virgin fields blew into the Caspian when he plowed it up, like plowing up the wild grass on a sand dune. But we followed that closely, and this was important from

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an economic standpoint to the United States because we like to sell them vast quantities of wheat. And so a very key part of what we did was in that field, and I would say we totally missed drawing the right conclusion.

One of the things I learned as Economic Counselor there was the extent to which the Soviet society and government can surprise the West. Even with satellite pictures you can't tell what amount of grain the Soviets have in their storage bins. We went into a negotiation with the Soviets, and so did the Canadians, on wheat in 1964. (cf. New York Times, front page 3/3/64.) We knew the harvest was bad. That was evident from reading between the lines in Pravda and grain journals, agricultural journals, and from what they would allow us to see.

But we were totally startled to find out when the negotiations started that the Soviets wanted a billion dollars worth of grain. This was the world's largest grain deal ever proposed, and we were totally taken by surprise. Why? Was the Foreign Service not doing its job? No. The problem was that we didn't know that Russia had no reserves. That was obviously a very strategic and military secret, which we did not know. We should have known more back in Washington. If the Agency, if State, or if Commerce had been smarter in those days, they would have noted that the Soviets were chartering up tankers two weeks before the negotiations started. They chartered all of the grain tankers that they could, and this should have been noted and given us a hint. It would have had great importance to figure out how much money the Soviets were going to put on the table. And so this was a very personal lesson in the ability of another society to totally surprise us.

During my tour in Moscow, the Soviet ability to surprise the world was demonstrated three times: 1) this billion-dollar wheat deal, 2) missiles in Cuba and 3) the overnight ouster of Khrushchev, which no diplomat or correspondent there claimed to have expected. In trouble, yes, but to wake up and find him gone peacefully, never. However, perhaps even more surprising in my diplomatic experience was not the acts of secret enemy societies but of our allies, i.e., Suez, where our closest allies, the British, French and Israelis,

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attacked Egypt without our foreknowledge. I have never understood how our intelligence services could have failed to uncover this plot or, if they did, to inform the President! As is known, he was infuriated, particularly since the Soviets picked the occasion to invade Hungary, and he forced our allies (and Zionists at home and abroad) to backtrack, quite a feat.

Q: Well now, this is speaking within our own society and the bureaucracy, what you were doing, the analyzing of the Five Year Plan is exactly the sort of thing that the CIA is supposed to do, too.

FUNKHOUSER: Oh, yes. We worked very closely together.

Q: Was this a cooperative effort, or were they doing on their side, while you were doing it on yours? Or did you have a feeling of real cooperation there?

FUNKHOUSER: I had great respect their economic cadre, I guess the CIA calls it, and the economic and financial experts in the CIA. I had to be briefed before I went to the Soviet Union. We would get from the Agency a list of non-classified questions which they considered any intelligent American business man or diplomat should try to get answers to. And they're basically pretty simple. What is the grain harvest? What are the papers saying? What are their reserves? which we never could answer. And I found that they relied heavily on us. We had covert CIA people from their Directorate of Operations in the Embassy, but I had no working relationship with them. I worked very closely with the agents (Directorate of Intelligence) on economic subjects, because none of it basically was covert. It was all open. We were all trying to get to the same point.

The extent of cooperation back in the Department, I think, was cooperative, but bureaucratically jealous.

Q: *A certain amount of competitiveness.*

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FUNKHOUSER: Basically, State had one person in Soviet Affairs that I reported to on economic policy. In fact, he was an older gentleman, not as old as I am now, but he was very relaxed, and he did very, very little. Almost all the economic reporting and the economic intelligence on the Soviet Union in 1961 to 1964 was, I would say, 95% done by the Agency overtly. I guess almost all overtly, because you just can't be very covert in the economic area.

In-house secrecy can, of course, be essential when it comes to covert CIA operations in an Embassy. "Need to know" rules. Two such operations stand out in my personal experience. One, the Penkovsky affair in Moscow (described later) and two, the U.S.-UK plot to overthrow the pro-Soviet President of Syria in 1956. In neither case was I "in the loop" although serving as Counselor of Embassy at the time. The Damascus plot was exposed to me inadvertently by ineptitude of the plotters, e.g., the CIA station chief was stone-deaf and could be heard inside or outside the Embassy without bugging devices. To me, the most bizarre twist in this foiled plot was that the date chosen for our plot was the identical day our allies picked to invade the Suez Canal! I've always wondered if they could have pulled a historic "scam" by diverting us from Suez and implicating us at the same time in their Middle East plot to overthrow Nasser and his allies.

So I was their man in Moscow, I would say, and they were my backers in Washington, because the State Department basically deferred to the Agency on agricultural and economic policy. Not policy so much, but getting the facts. So I'd say we worked extremely closely. That doesn't mean we didn't have knock-down, drag-out fights. In my amateurism, I had chosen to attempt an analysis of the direction of the Soviet military budget and policy by dissecting the speeches, the written word, the top statements made by Khrushchev and others at key occasions, and note when adjectives changed in such statements as "We are giving the 'top' priority to development of higher standard of living for Soviet citizens, including more money into consumer goods and into agriculture and food." And then you'd

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see, "We are giving 'high' priority to the development of consumer goods and agricultural reserves."

I can't really repeat the language now, but I did a very provocative report on the military trend, which indicated in 1962 that, judged on an economic basis only, all of the adjectives and all of the nuances which I in the Economic Section could find were tilting towards heavy industry and towards strengthening the military, compared to whatever existed. The nuances were all moving towards the military.

Tommy Thompson, the Ambassador, fully supported my report. But Boris Klosson, Political Counselor, was upset with an Economic Counselor getting into political reporting.

*Q: He was the DCM at this time? FUNKHOUSER: No, he was my opposite number.*

*Q: Political Counselor.*

FUNKHOUSER: He was Political Counselor, I was Economic Counselor, and Jack McSweeney was DCM. And Tommy Thompson, Ambassador Thompson to me then. We did play poker up to his death, together...thought it was an excellent report and decided we would challenge Washington on the diversion. All the evidence we cited, some of it seemingly trivial, showed the Soviets were tilting increasingly towards the military. The CIA ripped me apart, because they were the experts on budget. And they came back with the most microeconomic analysis that no general Foreign Service officer could possibly match, proving I was wrong. Six months later Cuba took place, and I got some credit for being one of the few that at least got on the record a Soviet military buildup six months before the massive military operation that took place in Cuba.

Another of my major responsibilities, not unrelated to a shift of resources to the military, was the "Big Inch Pipeline" crash project designed to tie both East and West Europe into dependency on Soviet oil while earning scarce hard currency. Over strong objections in certain Western circles, notably France, the West German Economic Counselor and

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I were successful in persuading the necessary authorities to cancel the West German Mannesmann steel plant contract to roll 36 inch pipe for the Soviets. Khrushchev was of course apoplectic; he claimed that the Soviets could roll their own 36 inch pipe, a rarity at the time for steel mills. He had boasted that he was going to “bury” us. In the end, the line was delayed an indeterminate time and completed only to the East German border. What this disruption of the Soviet economy and its long-term plans contributed to the eventual Soviet collapse is for those with access to Soviet archives to determine.

Q: The Cuban missile crisis. That was October of 1962. How did this play for you in the Embassy in Moscow?

FUNKHOUSER: Well, it was, as you know, startling. When the crisis broke one of the things that impressed me, as in the Middle East, mobs formed, so called. Crowds formed. But unlike the Middle East nobody got stoned, as an American would during the Suez crisis.

The so-called mobs and demonstrators in Moscow would stop when thred traffic light came on! They'd stop!

Q: *We used to call them “rent-a-mobs” in Yugoslavia.*

FUNKHOUSER: Oh, did you? You know exactly what I'm talking about. But to see any demonstration in the Soviet Union was really new to everyone. We were all told not to provoke the crowd. Just board up the windows at the Tchaikovsky Boulevard Embassy. Some of us lived there. Not to appear in the windows, which would be mob-inciting, as it certainly would in any underdeveloped country. Of course, we peeked out, and I remember, and this is illustrative of the question you asked. Here's this great demonstration. A few ink bottles thrown at the Embassy. The police were down with the demonstrators, but not doing anything. And one of the New York Times correspondents,

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Ted Shabad, we noted leaving, which we were forbidden to do, but you can't control the press. Leaving the embassy compound, going out into the mob, the demonstrators.

Well, we wondered what would happen. And a circle formed around him, and the police were near him. When he came back, we asked. Nothing apparently happened, except that's what happened. They all wanted to know what the news was. They were scared to death that there might be trouble—really worried. And there's no doubt that the worse the crisis got, the Soviets in every conceivable way, the Soviet people—we had an artistic group there, and they weren't all that good—but they got so many ovations during this period that they had to move the Soviets out of the theater. We took it as an expression of “We don't want any fight, bad relations, particularly a war with the United States.” It was quite clear that the people were demonstrating that they didn't want any part of confrontation with the U.S. That must have influenced Khrushchev, as well as the bombers we sent towards Soviet Union.

*Q: Did the Russian bureaucracy during this period shut down on you?*

FUNKHOUSER: No, no. In no way. No way. I dealt with Gherman Gvishiani, who was the Deputy Minister for Scientific and Technical Research, the organization that basically is charged with stealing our commercial secrets. Oleg Penkovsky, our famous spy who tipped us off on missiles in Cuba, was one of my principal overt contacts in his capacity as Protocol Officer of Gherman Gvishiani's Committee for Scientific and Technical Research. But until shortly before he was caught, tortured and shot, I was kept in the dark about his spy role. I found him rather pompous and gave little deference to him, undoubtedly to his surprise and annoyance. Only when the DCM Jack McSweeney wrote out on a piece of paper (to maintain mandatory audio-security in the Embassy) asking whether I had invited Penkovsky with other Committee officials to my periodic “movie night” in my Embassy apartment did I suspect his vital role. “Need to know” had been successfully followed. I learned later that it was in my bathroom that he was tipped off that the KGB was closing in on him and that he had sent his last fortunately erroneous warning to the USG that the



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Soviets were to launch their nukes! Ironically, I was the temporarily ranking officer in the Embassy when called to the Foreign Office to receive the official Soviet protest of U.S. spying. (See New York Times 12/26/62 front page.) But he was a very powerful man, son-in-law of Central Committee member Kosygin, and I had no trouble doing my work. It was quite the opposite.

The officials were like the French during times when DeGaulle was being very difficult with the Americans, and I became Political Counselor in Paris. They showed great concern that they might be talking to an American during the critical periods, but never was the door closed to me in Paris or Moscow during those times. It was obvious that they wanted no part of the government policy.

*Q: Well, you served under two of our major Russian Sovietologists, Tommy Thompson and Foy Kohler.*

FUNKHOUSER: Three really. Chip Bohlen in Paris.

*Q: Bohlen in Paris. I'll come to him later.*

FUNKHOUSER: I was lucky...

*Q: I wonder, could you compare, contrast their operating styles?*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, the three of them were totally different, I would say. Tommy Thompson was very reserved. He wasn't a hail-fellow-well-met, and he was very precise. He was the most, I would say, attentive to details. After all, he negotiated the only withdrawal known at that time, or maybe since, withdrawal of Soviet troops from a foreign country.

*Q: Iran?*

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FUNKHOUSER: No, in Vienna. He did the Vienna negotiation. He had seen it all. He had dealt with the Soviets, and no one of the three, I think, had his experience in negotiating with the Soviet Union, so nothing really interested him more than building up an accurate file on information that could have policy considerations for the United States more than the other two, I would dare say, although I'd hate to have to have Foy Kohler hear me say that. All of them were top flight diplomatists. But you asked about style. Tommy Thompson was 'do the work, forget the fun and games,' although he had two children and was a very fine parent. Sent one of them to a Russian public school together with my son. But a very serious, cold externally, warm at heart, but a man who ran a very precise staff meeting. He would understate what he wanted, and a few people who thought that they had a special relationship with Thompson, such as Boris Klosson, would go see movies in Thompson's flat and really was a favorite of the Ambassador socially, could overestimate the value of friendship over professional performance. I recall one staff meeting where I had heard the Ambassador ask Boris softly, "I would like a report at earliest possible date on this subject." And Boris had either forgotten it or didn't do it, and he'll never forget it, because the Ambassador aimed a reprimand at him which froze the entire staff meeting. I learned a lesson: "If the Ambassador ever asks for anything, and he didn't often, but by God drop everything, get at it and get back to him as fast as you possibly can." That's the way he operated. He only said it once, but you'd better pay attention. Style again.

Foy Kohler, quite the opposite. Delightful, showed up at all the American parties, which Thompson would rarely do. Was an easier man to get along with.

After all, we were under pressure in the Soviet Union; the families, the wives. We all lived together and worked together, as you know from Yugoslavia, only it was much, much worse. We couldn't open our windows in the offices; we couldn't even type on a typewriter; we had to write everything out in longhand. Security was heavy on us. Moscow was a crucible, which was very hard on the wives particularly. Some took to drink. There would be a morning drinking clutch. Martinis at 11 o'clock. Some became alcoholics. Mental

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distress from living that closely together, Americans don't do it like Russians, and a man like Foy Kohler, who had no children of his own, nevertheless he and his wife both spent an awful lot of time trying to build a family atmosphere in the Embassy, with great success. He obviously was extremely good at everything he did.

The Soviets, I think, had the greatest respect for Thompson of the three. I didn't know about Chip Bohlen in Moscow. But Bohlen spoke by far best the Russian and could really do business in Russian, which neither Thompson nor Kohler, although they were "three/three" in Russian, could. One revealing difference between Bohlen and Thompson was exposed in poker in which they both reveled. Tommy, the Scot, made far more money by judicious conservatism; Chip handled his chips more freely...always wanted to see the last card, a known fatality in the game. Both played for stakes in which a thousand dollars could be won or lost...I always thought it was a security risk in Moscow to open the game to anyone in the Embassy, including low-paid code clerks!

*Q: "Three/three" refers to the speaking/reading level. Fivspeaking, five reading is the top or bilingual level.*

FUNKHOUSER: So they were so-called "fluent." No one in the Moscow Embassy was allowed to go unless he spent one year in a room with a native speaker getting to the three/three level. There are exceptions. For guys who couldn't make it the U.S. government still paid for them to have private tutoring for one year; even a "two/two," which my deputy was, will be sent to Moscow after his year of language training. But Bohlen was by far the best Russian speaker. He started off his career in Russian school in Paris.

*Q: We might move to your time as Political Counselor in Paris. Then we can talk about Ambassador Bohlen at that point. How did you move from a East European post, a very high position there, to an equally high one in Western Europe? And moving from economic to political. These things in a rather rigid senior officer system seem to be atypical.*

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FUNKHOUSER: Well, again, I was lucky. I wanted the job, and those that supported me used the argument that in a capital such as Paris with a man such as DeGaulle, it is not unimportant to have a Political Counselor that has had some experience in the Soviet Union. It is not disadvantageous to have man in the key political position who has at least had some economic training, although we had a very fine economic staff there.

I guess what did it was I got good marks for my work in Moscow, and the Soviet Union is a very important factor in DeGaulle's philosophy and world politics: it didn't hurt to have a so-called Soviet expert who was there three years. I was asked to stay in Moscow an extra year, and I had the backing of both Thompson and Kohler with Bohlen. When my name was put up among others—I don't know how I got the nod, but I got the nod.

*Q: Bohlen then would have known you by reputation.*

FUNKHOUSER: Yes, I knew him; although I didn't know him well. But I think the grapevine certainly didn't hurt me. I had French. I had been in Paris, my first post was France. I had been assigned to Western European countries, which didn't hurt. Political Counselor in Paris basically covers the globe. We had a hot shot expert on Africa in the section, an expert on Eastern Europe, experts on Western Europe internally and externally. A broad background was not disadvantageous; my predecessor had been in Africa: his predecessor had been in the Middle East. The three people before me, none of them really had as much European experience as I'd had.

*Q: You went to Paris in 1965. You stayed until 1968. Maybe I might ask, how did Ambassador Bohlen run an embassy?*

FUNKHOUSER: Oh, totally different. Bohlen, he is not with us; I was honored by being the only usher at his funeral. He would turn over in his grave if he heard me say that he ran it by delegation. I use the word as with President Reagan. Bohlen did the big job. He knew DeGaulle. He got along extremely well with DeGaulle. He spoke almost impeccable

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French, colloquial French. He was the ranking, really, Ambassador in Paris. Everyone deferred to him. He would do his telegrams, and let the Embassy officers do theirs. He would have a staff meeting, go around the room and discuss with some passion anything from economic affairs to military affairs. Dick Walters was his military attach#.

*Q: This is Vernon Walters.*

FUNKHOUSER: Yes. And they didn't get along particularly well, because Vernon Walters probably spoke, well he did speak, even better French than Ambassador Bohlen, and he too had a special relationship with Charles DeGaulle. Among other things he was a consummate professional interpreter, never had a soldier under him, but he got to be a three-star general, I guess, by his genius in linguistics. He was the interpreter for Dwight Eisenhower when DeGaulle invited General Eisenhower to speak to the French crowds at what we call the City Hall from a balcony, and Walters translated for him. Eisenhower spoke for seven minutes, as Walters tells the story, without a pause, and Dick Walters repeated it without a pause for seven minutes. He's unbelievable. And at the end of which DeGaulle turned to Walters and like a school master to a little French student, said simply, "Tr#s bien, Walters [French: Very good, Walters]." But here were these two giants, both extremely, I'd say brilliant is the word. And they clashed. Staff meetings once a week were pretty tense to the point where Walters would only say a few words, because he knew that Ambassador Bohlen would pick him up.

But it was a very strong Embassy, and to get back to your point, the way he ran the embassy was to delegate. He rarely changed my telegrams, "mine" meaning those of the political section.

I had some extraordinary men working there. Three of them became Ambassadors and have a far better record than I have been able to assemble. I'm proud to have had them work for me and to have made sure that the record showed that Jack Perry, who did the Soviet work and French internal politics, who, other than Charles Yost, is probably the

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most literate ambassador in my book of diplomatists that I served with. Jack Perry would sit at his typewriter, put in the telegram forms and type out a brilliant report that newspaper men would envy, and I wouldn't change a word. Nor would ChiBohlen. Nor would Bob McBride, who had been in France all his life and was an outstanding draftsman.

*Q: He was the DCM.*

FUNKHOUSER: Yes, and not one of them would change Jack's telegrams. None would change Bob Oakley's, who was equally extraordinary. He covered all the Middle East and Africa. He didn't have the talent of typing final copy quite so well, but there's nothing that Bob Oakley didn't know or couldn't find out. He had great rapport with all of the Arab, Israeli and African embassies.

And then equally brilliant, able, sound was John Gunther Dean, who later was with me in Vietnam. He later became Ambassador to Beirut. He became Ambassador to Denmark. He became Ambassador to India. I don't know where he is now, but he has had more embassies than almost anyone that I know.

These three men. My job was really to cover the gaps that they might have and to pull it all together. We had not a very strong group on French internal political policy, so I paid more attention to that.

I was determined when I went to Paris that I would not be surprised by anything Charles DeGaulle did, because he was capable of surprising the United States even more than Khrushchev, I think. DeGaulle's capacity to surprise might include his publicly expressed admiration and respect for Nixon, even when, or perhaps because, Nixon was out of favor and office. During my tour, DeGaulle invited Nixon to the Elys#e for extensive discussion of domestic and international affairs. Prior to the meeting I was invited by Nixon to his hotel suite to brief him on the current political situation in France and on DeGaulle himself. For this I relied heavily on DeGaulle's first and most revealing exposure of his philosophy for leadership and action, "Le Fil de l'Ep#e" (The Edge of the Sword), the English copy of

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which Nixon borrowed to study. NB: DeGaulle's choice of a passage from Hamlet for his opening quotation always impressed me as a possible key to seminal French-English, if not Churchill-DeGaulle, differences, i.e., "Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument" becomes in French, "Etre grand, c'est soutenir une grande querelle!" Surely, "argument" suggests reason, while "quarrel" indicates emotion?

I read everything that Charles DeGaulle wrote. As my first act as Political Counselor, I asked the experts on the political staff to each give me the worst scenario that they could devise as to what Charles DeGaulle could do which would conflict with our policies in the world, domestically, Canada, Russia, China, Africa, what not, and they all turned out some great stuff. I put it all together as a dispatch, but Bob McBride and Bohlen wouldn't let me send it in. Not that they disagreed with sending in the worst that could happen to us: getting NATO kicked out of France, we had that in there. "Free Quebec". That wasn't too difficult to predict judging by his speeches. Trouble in the Middle East. In Vietnam, "American's get out of Vietnam," which DeGaulle said in a statement in Cambodia before a cheering mob. He said it was our fault. We had all that in. The one thing that he didn't do that we had in the report was that he would be the first to go to China. And we had it in there, but Nixon did it first. I found out later from the Quai d'Orsay, from the Elys#e, that the General fully intended to be the first to visit China, but he left office before he could do it, and then Nixon took over. But they wouldn't let me send that in on grounds that it might not be kept confidential and that there was such a hatred of Charles DeGaulle in Washington on the Hill that predicting all the terrible things that he might do, even if you're right, might backfire on us and U.S. policy. So I had to send it in "back channel."

*Q: I think this probably is quite correct. It would get out.*

FUNKHOUSER: "The American Embassy states DeGaulle will fight for Quebec independence, drive NATO out of France and get the Americans out of Vietnam and onto the gold standard." As I mentioned, I was allowed to send it in, but as a letter to the desk.

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Q: During your time there you were there during a time when DeGaulle was really reasserting what he would say was the rightful role of France in the world, and also were you there during the May of 1968, too?

FUNKHOUSER: I was, yes, during the student riots.

Q: During the riots. So in a way he got his come-uppance. But as a Political Counselor, how did you deal with these really sort of cataclysmic effects in our policy within France and with France itself?

FUNKHOUSER: Well, the worst crisis, of course, was the student uprising. This was May 1968. And my role, for which Dean Rusk sent me a special congratulatory telegram, was basically to organize all of the resources in the Embassy to report on a daily basis, immediate telegrams, what was going on. Jack Perry would go down and talk to the Communist party leaders and go mingle with the crowds. John Dean would cover the Asians, and Oakley others; they were all out and around town. My job was to go to the Quai d'Orsay and get their information. I got the Economic/Commercial Section to report what was happening to the franc and USIA to cover the media.

We didn't really work, unfortunately, with the CIA. They did their own reporting. We gave them all of our stuff, but I rarely saw any of theirs. They had some very fine contacts.

The military we worked with, but not too closely. And Dick Walters had excellent sources. The crisis came to a head when DeGaulle disappeared. Sarge Shriver was Ambassador then. Perhaps unfortunately he was a new boy. I'd been there three years, and it was pretty hard to go from Bohlen, who knew everything about the French to Shriver. But Shriver depended more on the staff, and after all, it was a crisis.

We, I think, reported it, all of the developments as well as we could, extremely fast. That was my role. Unfortunately, the Quai d'Orsay diplomats, when Charles DeGaulle disappeared, weren't very useful. The Military Attach#, Dick Walters, and perhaps to



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a lesser extent, the Agency, Locke Campbell, who were both very good, had the best information. And to prove that, Sarge Shriver called a rare meeting of all the heads.

“Where is DeGaulle?”

Woody Wallner, who took Bob McBride's place, had inside information from Andre Fontaine, the Le Monde correspondent, and some of the best sources in town.

*Q: He had been there during the war.*

FUNKHOUSER: Yes. He knew everything. He knew with whom everyone was sleeping, male or female. But he and Shriver never got along. Woody was sort of a caricature of a Europeanized Foreign Service Officer... long cigarette holder, and sort of a sophisticated Elim O'Shaughnessy, laid back, perfect French, totally un-American in Shriver's way. Shriver even put a trampoline in the Residence garden and everybody coming to cocktail parties would jump on the trampoline, most unsophisticated. They reacted very badly to each other. Unfortunately, Woody got the wrong advice from his best contacts saying that DeGaulle was going to either quit or be thrown out. And Shriver, in a very important incident in my diplomatic career, called all of the heads of section together and said, “Where is the General? We have to get into print on that. Katzenbach and others, including Ball, are calling for it. Where is he?” Walters said, “He's in Germany talking to the top Generals, finding out if they will support him if it comes to civil strife.” Walters didn't know whether the military would support him, but he assumed that they would. And that was absolutely correct as later history showed. When the General moved secretly, he moved very well.

Locke Campbell's Central Intelligence Agency deputy at the meeting was more ambivalent than Walters, but took the position that the General would stay in office. Woody, my boss, took the position that the General was out. “Whether he will fight or whether he doesn't fight, he's out.” I took the position that my Quai d'Orsay contacts and the Political Section's contacts did not know where he had disappeared to.

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At the end of the meeting Shriver said to Woody Wallner, "Write it up." And Woody, unbeknownst to anyone, sent in a telegram which unfortunately said exactly what he thought, rather than what Dick Walters and the Agency thought. No one really knew how it would come out. After all, he had quit back in 1946 when he became disgusted with the political scene. His expression for the student revolt was "chier au lit." "I will take student and popular opposition, but I won't take chier au lit," literally "shit in the bed." It's an old barracks term. I didn't know what it meant, I had to look it up. He could have, in Woody Wallner's view and others, followed precedent and resigned. But he didn't, and came back. And this was a very interesting exercise in foreign policy. But [neither] Shriver nor anyone else in our Embassy saw Woody's telegram. And that caused a great embarrassment in Washington, because Katzenbach immediately had a press conference and said welcome to Charles DeGaulle's successor. It wasn't quite that dramatic, but this was a very interesting exercise in "country team" action.

The DeGaulle incident exposed a curious example of errors in diplomacy made and compounded by both political appointees and career diplomats at home and abroad. Serious Error #1 was for political-appointee Shriver to demand a categorical message to Washington to show the Embassy knew without question what DeGaulle was up to! Error #2 was the equally positive and equally erroneous information provided to the Ambassador by a most experienced career diplomat in the face of conflicting, interagency intelligence. Error #3 was the impulsive decision of political-appointee Under Secretary Katzenbach to announce prematurely and erroneously to the world that the USG welcomed the new head of state Pompidou, and, Error #4, without his career diplomatic staff in State checking the facts directly with all intelligence sources, including the CIA and Pentagon in Washington with their "back-channel" reports. The irony of the incident was that DeGaulle must have been immensely delighted to have fooled and embarrassed the U.S. once again!

Under Bohlen I don't think that could have ever happened. Bohlen would have known or would not have given a categorical answer. He would have talked to the General, and he

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wouldn't have sent out such a telegram unless he had confidence in it. Shriver, being new, wanted a simple conclusion. He was running for Vice President at the time and was only in Paris on a sabbatical. I'm overstating the problem. Ten years later I had occasion to ask Fontaine where he got the inaccurate information that DeGaulle was resigning. His answer, "Pompidou himself!" Whether the Prime Minister wished to prime the pump for his succession of DeGaulle or whether he too had been duped by the General hopefully will be resolved by historians.

*Q: I would like to dwell more on this, but we will move on. You were assigned first to Rumanian training and then you ended up in Gabon.*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, when I came back from Paris after three and a half years, I wanted to stay in Western Europe or Eastern European affairs, where I had developed a certain expertise. And I had served in Rumania early in my career. After War College, I went to the Rumanian Legation as Political Officer and DCM. And with Soviet background, it was to me an obvious move, and I asked if I could be assigned there. And, indeed, was, but later in 1973.

*Q: This would be as Ambassador.*

FUNKHOUSER: This would be as Ambassador after Vietnam, not Paris. Bill Rogers put me up for the mission in Rumania, and the President approved. But then we had a little change in Secretaries of State, and Bill Rogers found that Henry Kissinger wanted his job and managed to push him out. Henry had his own man, Harry Barnes, very fine, whom he'd dealt with when he'd been in Rumania with President Nixon, and I didn't get the job.

I'm jumping the gun. I took Rumanian after Paris hoping to go there, but that never really came to fruition. Idar Rimestad (Deputy Under Secretary for Administration) said, "Look, the only Embassy open at this time is Gabon. Do you want it or not? There are ten men who want it." I didn't really want to go to the heart of darkness, but if you're going to live

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once on Earth you might as well see the world. And I'll never regret it. It was an eye-opener.

But then when I came back from Gabon and Vietnam, that's when Rogers and Nixon put me up for Rumania again. I did have Rumanian at the three/three level. But my loss was one of the best things that ever happened in my career. I tell young Foreign Service Officers, "If you're turned down or don't get what you want, you may be lucky." And cite my example.

After declining consideration for another Third World mission, I finally asked if I could go to Edinburgh as Consul General, because the North Sea oil was coming in, I was an oil expert and it was a key spot to be in. We also had important political work; Scottish nationalism was really getting very virulent, and separation from the UK possible. Also it was the first English-speaking country that I'd ever been assigned to, except Cairo is really English-speaking. And I'm a golfer. So I asked to go to Edinburgh. Well, I'm now a member at St. Andrews and Muirfield Golf Clubs. And in so far as my life, my family and my career were concerned, no post was more rewarding, certainly more rewarding than being Ambassador to Gabon where I really had so little to do. The following letter to the Editor of the Foreign Service Journal appeared in the March 1997 issue: "During the Nixon presidency, the White House insisted on compiling overseas reactions to Nixon's foreign policy speeches...On one occasion, AmEmbassy Libreville's...reply was short, and particularly honest...'Gabon slept on', wrote Ambassador Funkhouser. John C. Garon, Retired FSO, Bethesda, Maryland."

*Q: What were the issues in Gabon?*

FUNKHOUSER: There weren't any. I asked to leave.

*Q: Well Biafra was...*

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FUNKHOUSER: Well, Biafra, I enjoyed that, because it was the only time we really had something constructive to report because Gabon was supporting the Biafrans. The French, of course, were still pseudo-colonists running Gabon. And they were supporting Biafra. So at least we had some useful reporting to do on the other side of the war. That was really the only issue that I thought commanded attention of the State Department. It was so uneventful there.

It's one of the richest countries in the world. It was well run. And unlike one of my predecessors, who wanted to make Gabon into a non-French controlled, totally independent country like many of its neighbors who have gone down the drain, I was not interested in overthrowing in any way or participating in the overthrow of President Bongo, who was doing a reasonable job. I think I had, and this is for young Service officers, far more authority and far more interesting work as a Third Secretary in Paris doing the oil work, and certainly in the Middle East as Third Secretary, than as Ambassador. I asked to leave after a year, and was offered Vietnam. I accepted with relief.

*Q: What did you do? You went to Vietnam in August or something, 1970.*

FUNKHOUSER: I was one year in Africa, and one year was fine. One year's enough. I was offered what they called the DEPCORDS position in the Saigon Military Region, which went from the Cambodian border through Saigon to the delta. We had what was a "Pacification Program," so-called, where we were trying to win the minds and the hearts of the people. It was a very serious operation in which, the fighting military aside, all of the rest of the infrastructure of Vietnam was subject to American pressure to run the country well. Now this means we had responsibility for the roads, for the schools, for the hospitals, for the local militia of old men, old women and children who were left alone in the exposed villages when the young men went off to fight with the ARVN. There was a General in each of the military regions. A three-star General, Mike Davison, was my boss.

*Q: You're talking about American generals?*

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FUNKHOUSER: American generals. We're only talking about the American side now, but it was a bipartite, layered operation: American three-star general, State Department ex-ambassador or FSO-1, two-star so-called. Then an American General one-star, and then a State Department Minister, Counselor or Foreign Service Officer, Class 2. Defense and State were layered in each of the military regions. Perhaps the most unusual feature of this command structure was that the civilian Depcords also served as Senior Advisor to the Commanding General in each of the four Military Regions in South Vietnam. When the Commanding General of Military Region III (Third Regional Advisory Command), Lieutenant General Wagstaff, was on leave for five weeks in late 1971, I acted in his place with the assimilated rank of Major General, officially in charge of some 90,000 Free World Forces (U.S., Australia, Korea). I, of course, deferred military decisions to the military officers under me, but signed all orders as "Acting". I presume that civilian control of the military, e.g., Presidents, Secretaries of Defense et al, provided the precedent, but the role and responsibility was to me unique for a Foreign Service Officer. John Gunther Dean was in one area. Charlie Whitehouse was my predecessor. And each of us had something like 1800 Americans working for us trying to keep the country moving, operating and reasonably democratic on a year and a half assignment. I went from being in charge of an Embassy with ten or eleven people to an operation with 1800 Americans and an equal number of Vietnamese trying to build the infrastructure of the country. (Cf. my article in the 7/97 issue of the Foreign Service Journal, "Speaking Out," which contains the excellent advice of how to run an organization of thousands which I sought from the former Deputy Under Secretary for Administration, Idar Rimestad.)

Q: How did you feel about it? Let's put it back at the time in retrospect. Sort of the American way of trying to remake a country, a foreign ideology. You know, it was just a different country, different people.

FUNKHOUSER: Well, all I can say to that was I was fully supportive of what Dean Rusk was trying to do insofar as foreign policy and the Pacification Program was concerned.

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Helping the country; the hospitals, the roads, the schools. It had to be done. Trying to protect the villages. Getting the local militia to defend the villages. I would attend the military meetings, of course, with General Abrams and see that we always knew what the armed forces were doing. But it was very easy to identify with the fact that the job had to be done, as long as the policy was what the policy was, i.e., to stop “dominos” from falling to the communists.

At the end, I had a really serious difference of opinion with my superiors in Saigon. Not with the Embassy or Bill Colby, who had left as the Ambassador in charge of the Pacification Program, but with some of the military. I, having been there a year, made the strongest possible pitch with my Saigon bosses, with three-star General Mike Davison's support. “Start getting the Americans out of the country. Leave one advisor per Province, but don't have 50 colonels, some of them retired and “double-dipping” their salaries, advising a Vietnamese District Commander how to run his war.

Our Vietnamese commanding officers were at that time extremely good in Military Region Three. They didn't need advice. They needed guns and ammunition, what not, but they knew how to fight the Viet Cong just as well as we did. And I almost got removed from Vietnam by the top military brass, because I refused to put in a budget for 50 advisors where we only needed one. As reported to the State Department inspectors February 15, 1972, General Davison and Ambassador Colby, my two immediate superiors, fully supported my May 15, 1971 recommendation for immediate reduction of American advisors. In Military Region III I cut the Cords organization from over 1700 civilian employees as of January 1, 1971, to under 500 twelve months later. Unfortunately, Davison's and Colby's successors changed this policy.

Q: Was this for bureaucratic reasons? I'm talking about the impetus from our military. Or is it they didn't trust, have confidence, in the Vietnamese, or is it just the way we do things?

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FUNKHOUSER: It's the way we do things. More was better. If we're not winning, put more in. It was quantity, not quality. Military Region Three stood up best. We did remove a bunch of the advisors. It also destroyed me spiritually to see the American cornucopia being poured into a rathole, basically.

My budget was one paragraph. I got anything I wanted. I didn't want it. "Just write a figure in." It was 'anything goes.' And to a Foreign Service Officer who is used to saving money - in the old days by writing out longhand on one-time-pads to make your phrases more succinct. I couldn't understand it, and I didn't want to see the waste continue.

*Q: So, you left Vietnam after a tour of a year and a half? Did you feel that things were going wrong by the time you'd left or not?*

FUNKHOUSER: Oh, I did some reports on that for the Department. Marshall Green asked me to summarize where we stood, and I did it in terms of a football game. Letter to Assistant Secretary Green 1/20/72,

"OFFENSE: North is clearly 7-14 points stronger...DEFENSE: Both strong but neither has been truly tested in a one-to-one match-up. that is, without involvement (of outside powers)...SPECIAL UNITS: here the North has an established 12-point advantage... publicity...media... unsportsmanship conduct and foul play...In summary, South remains a 2-4 touchdown underdog in any head-to-head match today..." Three months later Marshall Green asked me for an update he could show to President Nixon which would answer his question, "Can the GVN hack it?" My conclusion dated 3/10/72, assuming continued U.S. material and military support, was "a fragile affirmative."

They were in our territory, but we were holding our own. I thought that the ARVN, the Vietnamese military, would stand up much better. They stood up extremely well in our area. And I really thought that the Vietnamese could hold their own if we pulled out



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gradually. Start the movement out soon. And I thought that they'd hold. But we didn't pull out really that fast. And I was relatively confident and, as it turned out, wrong.

*Q: Well, Region Number Three was certainly the last to hold out.*

FUNKHOUSER: South Vietnam collapsed from the top, Regions One and Two.

*Q: How did you find, here was a case of the State Department, the CIA and the Army working together.*

FUNKHOUSER: Excellently under Bunker, a great Ambassador.

*Q: At your level you were saying really with the military, not the military you were working with in Region Three, but the military from the top, that was trying to force more support on the Vietnamese.*

FUNKHOUSER: Individuals on some individual basis. That was it. Who knows? I could be wrong. But we all worked extremely well together under Bunker. My only doubts about the superior U.S. diplomatic and military leadership during my tour in Vietnam was how they could not have convinced Washington to get out sooner. Of course, they may well have except for the impossible question of how to do it with minimal loss to our national interest. I was not privy to their personal advice to Washington. I became convinced we just were in the wrong war at the wrong place and never should have been there. Once having gotten in, we were in a hopeless position without winning it. And the television, of course, made it too graphic to the American public what it was like there.

The one argument in support of our role in Vietnam which never failed me in later speeches and conversations was that I hoped America would always be on the side towards which women and children ran in terror. Refugees never ran north!

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Q: Did you have problems with the young officers? I'm speaking of Foreign Service Officers coming out to CORDS, which certainly was not exactly what they had thought of diplomatic life being like.

FUNKHOUSER: On an individual basis, some officers were so opposed to the war that I didn't think that they could do their job properly. It's not your job to make policy. You're out here, you've got to do the best you can. Report anything you want, were my instructions to all my staffs anywhere, particularly in Paris. Jack Perry, for example, was strongly against the involvement in Vietnam. I wasn't. I was a "hard hat."

My formative years in diplomacy were molded by successful U.S. policy of resisting Communist expansion globally, e.g., Marshall Plan, Berlin airlift, Cuba. In Korea, Communist tanks invaded the South; in Vietnam, Communist aggressors moved more subtly, by osmosis. I believed the "domino theory." I said, "Anybody on the staff, write what you want. You sign it. I'll send it in. I don't have to agree with you." And Jack Perry wrote a brilliant dispatch from the Paris optic on why this was a most unfortunate policy. He sent it in. Same in Vietnam. "If you don't agree, put it down in writing, but don't let that change your job. You're here to do the job." The trouble with most of the State Department officers in Vietnam, I didn't feel this way because I volunteered and was in a top position, was that they felt that they had done something wrong or they wouldn't be in Vietnam. In other words, if you're expendable, go to Vietnam.

*Q: Particularly at that time of experience. It was found that thi was not the road upwards.*

FUNKHOUSER: Although some of us who were DEPCORDS: John Dean, Charlie Whitehouse went on to a couple of Embassies. John Dean went on to four or five. At the lower level? Those that had studied Vietnamese, of course, and we had some brilliant officers, were in paradise. They had all the best sources. They were listened to. Four-star Generals would listen to Third Secretaries (language officers).

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Q: Well, Mr. Ambassador, I would like to continue this, but I know that you are under some time constraints. There are two questions that I try to ask of senior officers. One is what do you think was your greatest accomplishment in the Foreign Service, and the counterpoint is your greatest frustration.

FUNKHOUSER: Well, my greatest accomplishment was, and the one that had the most impact on the United States, was in my experience as a Third Secretary, first as Regional Petroleum Officer for the entire Middle East, and then as Petroleum Advisor in NEA in the late '40s and early '50s, where with some help, but not much, I was responsible for overall policy with respect to oil concessions in the Middle East, out of which developed the so-called "fifty-fifty" contract, which lasted for 25 years. That's written up in Congressional Reports when I testified on the Hill and my dispatches were all put into that record. There were a couple of Top Secret dispatches I did on Saudi Arabia which disappeared in the files. I got all of the concession contracts, and my Top Secret reports showed where concession areas were still open. Mainly under the Persian Gulf, as at Lake Maricaibo. But my work there, undoubtedly had more influence on the United States and the world, I think, than certainly anything else I've done, that I was involved in. And it's all in the record. My government and industry paper on international oil affairs are now housed in the Oil and Gas Institute of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, where I last served both as a diplomat and subsequently as International Affairs Advisor for a Texas oil company.

*Q: And on the disappointment, frustration side? Do you have anything you can think of?*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, you're always worried when you're in an unhealthy environment, such as some of the Middle East countries, that you and your family are going to get sick. I have had all the dysenteries, but fortunately my health has stood up. It's always difficult for a wife to be in a place like Moscow, and your children. It is impossible for me to generalize whether foreign service is a greater family risk than domestic. Despite recent claims of some Foreign Service wives for work/hardship pay because of risks abroad, I have heard of none, in contrast to Washington, who have been raped abroad. Our first son

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died in a car accident, but in the U.S. My wife suffered spinal injuries from a plane crash in Rome, but in an American plane. Her several miscarriages occurred both at home and abroad. In education, my children skipped grades when returning to St. Albans, Exeter, and Harvard. Somehow I felt my family was safer in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, during the war than in Georgetown!

Foreign hardships in my career were more than offset by the adventure, the believed contribution to something greater, the privileged level of social and professional engagement, however low it might be in some circumstances, the amenities such as our first billet in 1945, a suite at the Crillon in Paris, to say nothing of good and bad servants when there is diplomatic work to be done, new quarters to make into homes and young children to raise...and not forgetting tax-free booze! I wouldn't say frustration. Disappointment. Well, I was terribly disappointed not to be named Ambassador to Rumania, but it couldn't have worked out better. I have more real friends now. Our fortieth wedding anniversary was in Scotland. The joy of making lasting friends. My friends in other countries have not lasted. Five years in France, but I really have even stopped sending Christmas cards. Let's face it, an English-speaking, Western civilization country is the place to be. I was frustrated by having my name pulled from Rumania but, without doubt, it was one of the greatest things that ever happened to me, if you keep your health. I've also had a lot of luck with being Political Counselor in Paris and Economic Counselor in Moscow, probably unique in the Service.

*Q: Interesting posts and interesting jobs.*

FUNKHOUSER: Even Gabon, I loved it for one year. It is a tropical rain forest, the heart of darkness. I found out I had a distant relative who opened up the Schweitzer hospital at Lamberene on the Ogowe there back in 1856, Robert Hamill Nassau. I'd hate to live on the Earth without having seen Gabon.

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Oh, it's a frustration whenever you're waiting for an assignment, when you're walking the corridors. Walking the corridors waiting for a good job is still the most frustrating thing for a Foreign Service Officer. Not to know where he's going to go and not to know what his life is going to be like. That's probably gotten much worse now.

*Q: Well, things have changed, but would you recommend the Foreign Service as a career to a young person?*

FUNKHOUSER: My daughter's in it and my son-in-law.

*Q: Where is your daughter stationed?*

FUNKHOUSER: Well, they're both still in Washington. They're just new in the Service. She went to Harvard and Pushkin Institute in Moscow and she speaks fluent French and Russian. And she married a man that she met in the Service whose father was a USIA officer. Sure, I'd recommend it. Ten years later I've changed my mind. My daughter is divorced and has left the Foreign Service. Wives are not rated for their work in efficiency reports nor are they expected to help their husbands and the Embassy mission. Social/political agendas reportedly have overtaken the promotions and professionalism I knew in the State Department. They don't have the rich life that we did. You could be stupid when I was a young Foreign Service Officer, and the fact that the United States was so overwhelmingly powerful made you an oracle in any society. Sort of like the nose of a rocket going up. No matter who you were, you had infinite power behind you after World War II. Now it's quite different. Plus the fact you can get shot.

*Q: Yes. Well, I thank you very much.*

FUNKHOUSER: Not at all. It was a pleasure to talk about these matters. Distaff: A glaring and unforgivable omission in this oral history is failure to emphasize the vital role played during my diplomatic career by my incomparable wife Phyllis through, as my colleagues will attest, her beauty, wit, uncommon common sense and requited love. There are many

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priceless anecdotes to relate, but the following is one of the more memorable with which to end these Footnotes.

### POSTSCRIPT

Concerning memorable encounters at official French government farewell dinners for Ambassador Charles Bohlen at the Quai d'Orsay and Elys#e Palace.

The French Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville, hosted a huge, sumptuous dinner party, as only the French can do, December 1967 at the palatial Quai d'Orsay, their Foreign Office. The seating was for perhaps 100; the tables, service, liveried waiters, silver, crystal, menu breathtaking. Beautiful ladies were in resplendent gowns and jewels; diplomats in white tie, uniforms, decorations.

For the occasion the high-ranking French ladies followed the custom of being dressed by the best fashion houses and jeweled to match. My lovely wife, together with several other Embassy wives, were similarly offered the loan of appropriate jewels from the famous shop of Harry Winston off the Champs Elys#e. My wife resisted a too spectacular offering, but chose a discrete but fabulous (for her) diamond necklace with the most interesting, following results.

At the mile-long table her dinner companion, Baron Rothschild, asked why he had not met her before in Paris or on the Riviera and looked forward to further encounters. For my part I was astonished to have the Foreign Minister himself who had never laid eyes on me before approach me after dinner and engage me in conversation alone for an extended period! As Political Counselor I was one of the lower ranking diplomats at the dinner. It created talk which led inter alia to a subsequent conversation with the Embassy Military Attache, General Vernon Walters (later Ambassador to Germany, CIA Director, etc.) in which he volunteered that I was destined to have any Ambassadorship I wished (sic)...he recommended Rio where he had served with distinction as Military Attach#.

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Shortly thereafter, President DeGaulle entertained the Bohlens at an even more impressive, but more exclusive, dinner at his residence, the Elys#e Palace. Again, following dinner I (and all others present) was dumbfounded to see the Chief of Protocol approach me and announce that the President wished to speak to me! As the room parted, I was ushered up to the towering General who spoke to me “in private” while the guests watched. I have recounted the conversation elsewhere, but suffice it to say he wished to emphasize the point that the United States would be making a grave error ever to consider relationships with Asian countries on the level with Europe because of fundamental and irredeemable differences in cultural heritage. I expressed great appreciation for his message and undertook to pass it to my superiors but managed a meek response that Americans unfortunately might find it difficult to accept in view of our traditional claim to be a “melting pot” of immigrants and frontiers East as well as West. When I staggered back to those I had been talking to, the French Director of Political Affairs, Jacques de Beaumarchais, was discrete enough not to inquire re the conversation but only to remark, “Now you have your book!”

Diplomatic lesson: Even with insufferable conceit, there is no plausible explanation for the foregoing events other than the Winston necklace on my wife! French diplomat/author Peyrefitte should have added to his famous aphorism on how to succeed in diplomacy, “Il faut #tre un peu sceptique, cynique, ironique [French: One must be a little bit skeptical, cynical, and ironic]”...”et riche [French: and rich]!”

End of interview